*Between Page and Screen*: Video Transcript

You type “augmented reality” into Google and are given about 115,000,000 results in 0.67 seconds. You get a definition, an example, a news article, a hot take. You switch tabs and search the same term in the Electronic Literature Database, a page you bookmarked a little over a year ago when you were taking a break. Symbol making, using, misusing; “augmented reality.” You hit enter. You find a project called *Between Page and Screen* and click on it. You see a screenshot, an artist’s statement, a link to somewhere else. You click. You are curious. You seek out a book that is not meant for you. You think you can find it in the library. You do. You hold a small, red paperback with no words on its pages. You flip through, you cannot read. You were expecting this. Black Quick Response (QR) codes mark the center of each page, pixelated hieroglyphs meant for a different reader. You open your computer, a new window, you type in [the address](http://www.betweenpageandscreen.com/). You see yourself, your webcam is on, it has to be. You’ve had a smudge of pen on your cheek. No one told you. You wipe the smudge, spreading it out, not really removing it.

You hold the book in front of your face. You hold it towards the camera, like you’re showing a picture book to a classroom of kindergartners sitting on a scratchy, durable rug. Black text appears, your face an opaque background. It’s backwards, you cannot read. You were not expecting this. You frown, you can see yourself. You turn the book back towards you, as though you could read it. Left to right. You prop your elbows up, so you can be seen trying to read. Black text appears, right side around this time.

A letter, a love letter, a make-up letter, after maybe a break-up letter. You flip through. Page and Screen have a lot to say to one another, you watch. They like to send things—material things—back and forth. Letters move. You’re in control, making letters move. You’re just watching, though, too. You see yourself. You see page and screen, Page and Screen, their moving letters. The address where all the movement happens. The computer you bought refurbished from the Apple store on West 14th Street. The programming of it all.

In an alliterative, cryptic letter from Page to Screen, Page writes: “Dear S, A screen is a shield, but also a veil—it’s sheer and can be shorn. There’s a neat gap between these covers, a gate agape, through which you’ve slipped your tang. Paper cuts too, Swordsmith. Let’s name this pagan pageant, these rows of lines or vines that link us together. —P.”

Through your screen Page says, “A screen is a shield, but also a veil—it’s sheer and can be shorn…” Page makes a point. Your screen is not Screen, not not Screen either. Both Screen and your own are material, contingent. Page knows the same thing about themselves, asking later to “name this pagan pageant, these rows of lines or vines that link us together.”

Page and Screen both need language, text, to act, alone or together. In a subsequent plea, Screen implores: “Page, don’t cage me.” Screen says, later, “We share text’s fleshy network—your trellis and my tendency to excoriate, your fang and my carnassials.”

Screen places page and screen on opposite sides of the same coin—their shared “text’s fleshy network,” language as symbolic action unites them. Text to them both is different. Page’s text is not the same as Screen’s. Text is Page’s “trellis.” It is a structure to climb upon and grow. It reverses what it mean to print. Text is also Screen’s “tendency to excoriate.” Text is an act, a “tendency,” a dynamic opportunity to be critical and cutting. Text needs Page and Screen to make symbolic meaning, to enable symbolic action.

Page makes explicit what you have been led to conclude all along. The “trellis” of text for the page is a metaphor, just as text is “tendency to excoriate” for Screen. You remember something you read this week, about metaphor, about metaphor as a different color filter lens through which to see. You think that might be what’s happening.

Page, in the next letter you see, blurs the different color filters, a two-way lens, perspective upon one another. Page sees “text,” “trellis,” and “metaphor” all at once. They are all in terms of one another. Each is its own node in text’s “fleshy network.” “Dear S, that trellis is a metaphor—it props me up. I propagate agate pages, a paper argot: rapt tropes. Be my apport? What are boundaries anyway? —P.”

Page ends their letter, asking “What are boundaries anyway?” You ask yourself too. Of Page, of Screen, of page, of screen, of your own face coming back into focus as you close the book. The boundaries of both Page and Screen, pages and screens, are material, are symbolic. The digital-virtual space is legible, itinvites you in. You start to understand and play with these materials that do the work of symbols. You start to understand the symbols that do the work of materials.

You see yourself, the room behind you. The big double-paned windows, the girl sitting flipping through an older and larger rare book. You close the window. You check your email. You rub the spot on your cheek, where Page signed off, hoping to smear the ink enough to make it not visible. You remind yourself to go to the bathroom before that meeting. You flip through the book one more time. You use the arms of the chair to stand up slowly. Your foot is asleep. An afternoon sunbeam hits the right angle through the window, temporarily blinding you. Your foot and your vision are the same for a moment. Muted, variable, pixelated. You turn the book in.